UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
41st meeting
held on
Thursday, 10 December 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 41st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK (continued)

Elections to the International Civil Service Commission (continued)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/47/SR.41
17 December 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

92-58212 65275 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (continued)

Election to the International Civil Service Commission (continued)

1. Ms. ROLLET (Department of Administration and Management), having recalled article 4 of the statute of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) governing the procedure for the nomination of members of the Commission, said that the deadline for the submission of nominations had been set at 15 October 1992 and most nominations had been received by that date. Later, however, one of the candidatures had been withdrawn and another had been formally submitted on 9 December. It was unfortunately obvious that the Secretary-General could not complete the consultations with other organizations of the common system required under the Commission's statute in time for the date scheduled for the elections, 11 December.

2. The vacancies on the Commission were: two for the African Group; two for the Asian Group and one for the Group of Eastern European States. The nominations received, as of 10 December, were: four for the African Group, four for the Asian Group and one for the Eastern European Group. Where the number of candidates exceeded the number of vacancies, a choice would have to be made by election.

3. Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu), speaking on behalf of the Asian Group, said that, at a meeting of the Group held on 7 December, the Indian delegation had formally announced the withdrawal of its candidate. Two delegations had then expressed their interest in putting forward a candidate for the vacancy. The Group had thereupon endorsed the candidate of Bangladesh and had reaffirmed its previous endorsement of the candidature put forward by the Philippines. As those two candidatures had the Asian Group's unqualified and unanimous support, he appealed to all members of the Committee to lend them their support. In the interest of complying with the Commission's statute, the Asian Group was prepared to agree to the elections being postponed to 18 December.

4. Mr. LAADJOUZI (Algeria) and Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that, in the interest of complying with the statute of the Commission and thereby strengthening the common system, they would also have no objection to postponing the elections by one week.

5. The CHAIRMAN said that, in addition to the candidate endorsed by the Group of Eastern European States, the two candidates endorsed by the Asian Group and the four candidates endorsed by the African Group, two further candidatures had been presented to the Chairman of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) by a number of organizations within the common system.

(The Chairman)

6. He suggested that elections to all vacant seats on the International Civil Service Commission should be held on Friday, 18 December, in order to enable the Secretary-General to conduct the necessary consultations and to submit his report to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

7. It was so decided.

8. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that, owing to the lack of time, document A/C.5/47/35 on elections to ICSC would not be issued in all languages but only in English. If he saw no objections, he would take it that the Committee agreed exceptionally to consider the document in English only.

9. It was so decided.

10. Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu) expressed the Asian Group's appreciation of the decision taken and thanked all the delegations concerned, and in particular those of the African Group, for their cooperation.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
42nd meeting
held on
Friday, 11 December 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 42nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

later: Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/47/SR.42
18 December 1992

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 109: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT (continued) (A/46/34 and A/46/219; A/47/16 (Part I), A/47/34, A/47/119, A/47/276, A/47/373 and A/47/755)

1. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon) said that the submission by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the annual report on its work provided an opportunity for the Committee to engage in a fruitful dialogue with the Unit and to evaluate the Unit's work. In that connection, it was appropriate to ask whether the Unit had successfully carried out its work programme during the period under consideration. In order to enable the Committee to answer that question, the Unit's report should have indicated in a precise manner the number and type of specific objectives achieved. Another issue which the report addressed was the extent to which the Unit's recommendations had been implemented. Since a selective approach had prevailed in the past, he was encouraged by the trend towards greater implementation of the Unit's recommendations.

2. With respect to the quality of the Unit's work, the assessments of the Unit itself, ACABQ and others provided a range of opinions. While the Unit's report sometimes took on a triumphal tone, the report of ACABQ had identified areas in which the Unit's work had been unfocused. He believed that the truth regarding the Unit's performance lay somewhere in between those two poles. The Inspectors should be made to specify how they could respond to practical difficulties. The Unit had experienced problems with respect to staffing and technical resources. His Government appreciated the comments by ACABQ on the subject, and it supported the Unit's request for additional resources to meet its personnel and technical needs.

3. With respect to the Unit's future work programme, while he recognized that specific items could be subject to change, he believed that priority should be given in 1993 and 1994 to projects already under way in connection with the restructuring of the Organization, in particular problems of decentralization and coordination within major United Nations organizations and within the United Nations system as a whole. Assessments by JIU of the management of activities pursuant to the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation of Africa would also be of particular merit. During 1993 and 1994, activities in that area would reach a critical stage, and the Unit should concentrate on evaluating the effectiveness of the system-wide implementation of programmes.

4. Turning to the question of strengthening the effectiveness of JIU, he said that there had already been an extensive exchange of views between the Unit and ACABQ in that regard. He endorsed the recommendations of the ACABQ report with respect to the selection of Inspectors. According to article 2, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Unit (resolution 31/192, annex), Inspectors should be chosen from among members of national supervision or inspection bodies, or from among persons of a similar competence on the basis of their special experience in national or international administrative and financial

(Mr. Monthe, Cameroon)

matters, including management questions. While he believed that the ACABQ recommendations were crucial to maintaining the excellence of the Inspectors, at a certain stage it became the responsibility of the General Assembly to ensure that excellence was maintained.

5. In drawing up its work programme, the Unit should exchange views with the organizations and agencies concerned, as that was the best way to ensure that their needs were taken into account. In addition, he believed that a proper balance between the research and the inspection work of the Unit could be struck as long as the Unit confined its research activities to new methods of monitoring and inspection in the areas of planning, budgeting and programme evaluation. Obviously, such activities would benefit from coordination with ACABQ and the United Nations Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR). He expressed support for the JIU request for additional personnel and technical equipment in order to strengthen the efficiency of the Unit in investigating, monitoring, inspecting and standard-setting. He hoped that the Assembly would continue to pay close attention to the reports of the Unit and said that in order to do that it would be necessary for JIU to continue to submit annual reports.

6. Mr. DIPP (Dominican Republic) said that JIU had performed its work in an efficient manner, as demonstrated by the cost savings in telecommunications, translation services and travel mentioned in paragraph 60 of its report (A/47/34), and it was hoped that further economies would result from the current analysis of conference services. The addition of five new Inspectors should provide new impetus to the Unit's work in the future. He welcomed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee with regard to measures to improve the impact of the Inspector's reports, and said that the dialogue between JIU and ACABQ should be broadened. Lastly, he supported the Unit's request for additional computer equipment and personnel, but believed it would be preferable to finance those items from the Unit's existing budget.

7. Mr. SUKAYRI (Jordan), said that his country, which had been among the first to join in efforts for reform and restructuring at the United Nations, believed that reform was a process which must draw on accumulated expertise but constantly adapt to the new requirements of a changing world. The Joint Inspection Unit, as an independent body with a statute accepted by Member States, the Secretariat and participating organizations, could play an effective role in that process. As probably all would agree, the basic principles underlying the existence and functions of the Unit remained valid; it simply remained for those principles to be strengthened by the Inspectors themselves, the Secretariat and participating organizations, in close cooperation with other bodies entrusted with related but different mandates such as the Advisory Committee, the Board of Auditors and the Panel of External Auditors.

8. Noting the indications in the Unit's reports of closer consultation between it and participating organizations, particularly concerning inspection and evaluation, his delegation emphasized the need for full cooperation

(Mr. Sukayri, Jordan)

between them, as mentioned by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 14 of its report (A/47/755). Improved performance and productivity would be impossible without such cooperation. The Unit might wish to work in the course of the coming year towards the establishment of a formal set of inspection standards to be approved by the participating agencies, as suggested by the Advisory Committee.

9. It was also of importance that the Unit and participating organizations reach agreement on a programme or programmes of work to be carried out within a specific time-frame without, of course, any prejudice to the Inspectors' independence of opinion or entitlement to conduct investigations without prior notification, or to the fundamental purposes of the Unit's work.

10. With a view to ensuring the necessary level of competence and ability, while the current procedure for selection and appointment of Inspectors was basically sound, there was room for some improvement, particularly at the stage of submission of candidates. His delegation believed that experience gained in the United Nations system was a useful qualification, but had doubts about the Advisory Committee's suggestion that countries submit multiple candidates. The Unit's competence and ability also inevitably depended on the human, technical and financial resources at its disposal: those resources might need to be increased.

11. His delegation was pleased to note the first appointment as an Inspector of a candidate from his country. It hoped that the new blood provided by all the recently appointed Inspectors would also help to enhance the Unit's performance and productivity.

12. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada), speaking in connection with the term of appointment for members of the Board of Auditors, said that, since the United Nations had adopted a biennial accounting period, it was appropriate to review the original three-year term for members of the Board of Auditors so that membership would coincide with the accounting cycle. He therefore suggested either a four-year term with the possibility of re-election for a second term, or a six-year term without the possibility of immediate re-election. Elections would then take place every two years for terms that would end six months after the conclusion of a biennium. Such a move would enhance the effectiveness of the Board of Auditors since the same Board would audit the accounts for the entire biennium. He looked forward to hearing comments from the Advisory Committee and the Board of Auditors on the question.

13. He also welcomed the dialogue between the Panel of External Auditors and the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions concerning the development of common accounting standards and looked forward to the implementation of those standards for the biennium ending on 31 December 1993. In addition, the standards should be periodically reviewed and updated to adapt them to the changing information needs of Member States and to international accounting guidelines.

14. Mr. OSELLA (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the two main attributes of the Joint Inspection Unit were its autonomous character and the system-wide nature of its mandate. However, despite the extensive scope of that mandate, the Member States and bodies in the system did not appear to give due weight to its work. Consideration should therefore be given to the changes needed to enable the Unit to fulfil its functions properly.

15. First of all, greater participation was needed by the Member States in determining the work programme of JIU in order to set priorities and ensure that the Unit complied with them. Second, there was a need to identify more clearly the comparative advantages of JIU in relation to other technical bodies responsible for the monitoring and improvement of administrative management, such as the Advisory Committee, the Board of Auditors and the internal auditors of the respective bodies. Member States needed to work out a clear division of labour in order to enable them to assign specific tasks to the Unit. Finally, a cost-benefit analysis was needed with a view to providing JIU with a level of funding appropriate to the contribution it made.

16. In order to respond to the above requirements, the work of the Unit needed to be examined in the context of the system as a whole, so as to identify the factors which had limited its productivity and impact.

17. He noted the proposal to establish an office of inspector-general, but felt that further clarification was needed as to its planned relationship with existing bodies responsible for administrative management, before Member States could give their views.

18. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, expressed disappointment at the fact that, for the second year running, the Committee would not have time to give the reports of the Unit the in-depth study they merited. He welcomed the clear description of the problems facing the Joint Inspection Unit provided by the Advisory Committee's report. It must be acknowledged that, although some of the Unit's reports were of considerable interest and led to significant follow-up, not all the work of the Inspectors was of the same relevance. He therefore endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendations, particularly those contained in paragraphs 29 and 32 to 37, and urged that JIU should comply with them. He also noted the conclusions contained in paragraph 42.

19. The Twelve had already expressed their concern over the general state of the internal and external evaluation and monitoring mechanisms in the parts of the United Nations covered by the plan and the programme budget, and it was only right to consider the contribution being made by JIU in that context. Although the statute of the Unit predated the introduction of the current programme planning, budgeting, evaluation and monitoring rules, it was appropriate for the Unit's role to be considered in a broader context, as it was in the Advisory Committee's report, and he hoped that the Unit would consider carefully the points made by the Advisory Committee when drawing up its work programme for future years. Governments were entitled to be

(Mr. Stott, United Kingdom)

concerned about the volume, quality and relevance of the Inspectors' recommendations and it might be appropriate to consider those questions in greater depth at the forty-ninth session, when the Committee might also have the benefit of the views of the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

20. Mr. KOULYK (Ukraine) said that, while it was clear from the annual report (A/47/34) that the Unit had had made some important contributions, nevertheless the Inspectors could have been more critical of the Unit's performance, particularly with regard to the question of management in the Secretariat. The mandate of the Unit set out in General Assembly decision 46/446 required that the Committee should examine the work of the Unit even more closely; therefore, he agreed that the time allotted for consideration of the JIU work programme and its report was insufficient.

21. He identified areas in which the Unit had had significant achievements during the past year, noting that the participation of the Committee had been instrumental in that success. In that connection, he drew attention to the Unit's studies on the use of balances in the United Nations system and managing works of art in the United Nations. On the other hand, Member States still did not know what would be done with the Nobel Peace Prize money which the Organization had won for its work in peace-keeping operations. He noted with satisfaction the Unit's intention to examine the institutional, administrative and financial consequences of the United Nations role in peace-keeping operations, and said that such attention was justified, as peace-keeping was becoming an ever-larger responsibility for the Organization.

22. He drew attention to paragraph 18 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/47/755), which stated that the Unit was unresponsive to suggestions of the organizations in drawing up its work programme. In that connection, he requested that the Vice-Chairman of the Unit should explain how the Unit took into account the recommendations of the Organization and how it analysed decisions and reports of the General Assembly. He expressed his agreement with the conclusion in paragraph 29 of the same report, which noted that there had been no real follow-up with respect to the recommendations of JIU, and he endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendation in paragraph 37 that consideration should be given to introducing a form of budget implication statement in respect of JIU recommendations whose implementation would entail major financial expenditures.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.20/Rev.1 concerning agenda item 97 (continued) (A/47/7/Add.12; A/C.5/47/55)

23. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) welcomed the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/55) and noted that the resolution in question had been adopted by the Third Committee following submission of that document, in

(Mr. Merifield, Canada)

accordance with the rules. However, he agreed with the recommendation contained in the report of the Advisory Committee (A/47/7/Add.12) that the Secretary-General's estimate should be reduced from $2,577,000 to $2,000,000. He recommended that an amount of $2 million should be appropriated and that the expenditure should be considered of an extraordinary nature, relating to the maintenance of peace and security, and should be treated outside the procedures related to the contingency fund, as advocated by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/55, para. 21).

24. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that the question was a very serious one and his delegation supported the activities concerned. He recalled that the Committee had experienced similar difficulties in the past in discussing the financing of a monitoring mission to Haiti. The main problem was how to accommodate the expenditure in question within the budgetary procedure laid down in resolution 41/213. The amount concerned was modest and, according to the Advisory Committee, could be slightly reduced. While he welcomed the willingness of the representative of Canada to accept the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the level of the expenditure, he would ask him to recognize the possible implications of his proposal for the new budgetary procedure. The problem which had led to the adoption of resolution 41/213 had been the accumulation of additions to the regular budget, creating the impression that the overall level of the budget was out of control because of a general failure to appreciate that available resources were finite. Although he realized that it might be difficult to negotiate an acceptable compromise, he did wish to point out that if the Advisory Committee's proposal was adopted it would not prevent the activities concerned from being undertaken, but would allow them to continue while leaving the question of the method of financing undecided. He was also concerned at the relative lateness with which the Secretariat had begun its efforts to collect voluntary contributions. In view of the urgency of the question, he hoped that action could be taken speedily on an agreed basis.

25. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in the light of the statement of programme budget implications submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/55) and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee (A/47/7/Add.12), the Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.20/Rev.1, an appropriation of $2 million would be required under section 2 of the programme budget for 1992-1993. It was understood that those requirements should be dealt with under the provisions of paragraph 11 of annex I to General Assembly resolution 41/213 and, accordingly, should be treated outside the procedures relating to the contingency fund. In addition, the General Assembly would need to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments of up to $103,000 for requirements in 1992, pending the Assembly's approval of the revised appropriations for 1992-1993.

26. Mr. TANG Guangting (China) read out the first sentence of paragraph 3 of document A/C.5/47/55: "The requests contained in paragraph 2 above are related to subprogramme 4, Enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of

(Mr. Tang Guangting, China)

periodic and genuine elections, of programme 4, Special political questions, trusteeship and decolonization, which are incorporated in the revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, recommended by the Committee for Programme and Coordination for adoption by the General Assembly at its current session." He wished to place on record his understanding that the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) had not made such a recommendation.

27. Mr. MORET (Cuba) said that he supported the previous speaker's statement; subprogramme 4 of programme 4 was currently the subject of ongoing consultations.

28. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) asked whether the Secretariat could indicate the current and prospective charges to the contingency fund. As his delegation strongly supported the activities referred to in the draft resolution and would not wish to see them curtailed, he wondered whether an effort could be made to identify other activities from which the necessary resources could be redeployed.

29. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that her delegation also believed that the activity was important and supported the Secretary-General's proposal.

30. Mr. BOIN (France) said that the proposal was not entirely clear. If the additional expenditures were to be financed from the contingency fund, in other words, on the basis of assessed contributions, his delegation could agree to that. He shared the views expressed by the representative of Canada and hoped that the Secretariat would reply to the questions raised.

31. Mr. DUVAL (Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, as pointed out by the representatives of China and Cuba, the reference in paragraph 3 of document A/C.5/47/55 to subprogramme 4 was an error; he expressed apologies to the Committee in that regard. The proposal for the financing of the appropriation was based on the Secretary-General's understanding that the requirements which would arise related to the maintenance of peace and security and should therefore be treated outside the procedures relating to the contingency fund. It was difficult, at the current stage, to answer the question raised by the United Kingdom representative concerning the availability of resources from the contingency fund, as substantial programme budget implications remained to be acted upon by the Committee. It was his understanding that approximately $11.2 million of the $15.5 million which remained available for 1992 had already been committed.

32. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation would prefer to proceed on the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, with the related commitments being treated as an advance from the Working Capital Fund, on the understanding that commitments would be a first charge against contributions received pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/137. In that connection reference must also be made to financial regulation 6.4, which

(Mr. Kinchen, United Kingdom)

provided that advances from the Working Capital Fund should be reimbursed through the submission of supplementary programme budget proposals, except where they were recoverable from some other source.

33. Mr. BIDNY (Russian Federation) said that his delegation supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, but was willing to work towards a solution acceptable to all.

34. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that the United Kingdom position was interesting. He asked whether the Fifth Committee could appropriate funds from trust funds.

35. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) said that since the General Assembly had asked the Secretary-General to establish a trust fund for electoral assistance, the Fifth Committee could decide whether the activity should be financed from the regular budget or from that trust fund.

36. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would defer its consideration of the matter, since it was clearly not in a position to take a decision.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.16 concerning agenda item 93 (b) (A/C.5/47/54)

37. Mr. ACAKPO-SATCHIVI (Secretary of the Committee), speaking on behalf of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, drew attention to document A/C.5/47/54 concerning the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.16. Under the terms of paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would reiterate its request to the Secretary-General to ensure that sufficient resources were provided to the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI), within the overall appropriations of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, to enable the Institute to carry out, in full and on time, all its mandates. As indicated in paragraph 3 of document A/C.5/47/54, a grant to UNAFRI of $180,000 from the United Nations regular budget had been approved under the terms of General Assembly resolution 46/153, and had been provided to cover part of the administrative costs of the Institute, namely, the costs relating to the posts of Director and Deputy Director. The Advisory Committee had been informed by representatives of the Secretary-General that a balance might remain at the end of 1992. In paragraph 4 of document A/C.5/47/54, the Secretary-General stated that he intended to submit proposals on the longer-term solutions to the financing of the Institute to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session. With regard to the financial needs of UNAFRI for 1993, the Secretary-General sought the concurrence of the General Assembly in the continued use of any balance of the 1992 grant for the financing of the posts of Director and Deputy Director (para. 7). Should the balance of the 1992 grant prove insufficient for that purpose, the Secretary-General would seek the Advisory Committee's concurrence in the redeployment of the necessary resources within the overall appropriations for the biennium 1992-1993.

38. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda), supported by Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria), requested clarification as to whether the grant of $180,000, which had been approved for 1992, had actually been made available to the Institute, as problems had arisen in the past when appropriated funds had not been remitted. At the time of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/153, there had been an understanding that any balance left over from the grant would be used to cover the Institute's administrative costs.

39. Mr. DUVAL (Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, in accordance with the usual procedure, funds were made available to the Institute through an allotment to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). He confirmed that the entire amount had been allotted in two instalments of $90,000 each, and that ECA would transfer those funds promptly to the Institute.

40. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in the light of the statement of programme budget implications submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/54) and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.16, it would need to concur in the Secretary-General's proposals on the financing of UNAFRI.

41. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that the item under consideration had been the subject of prior debate. While his delegation supported the Institute's activities, it was unable to support draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.16 for budgetary reasons. If his delegation received assurances that the Secretary-General's proposals would be the basis for the report to be submitted to the General Assembly in plenary meeting, it could join the consensus in the Committee; any departures from them, however, would be a serious matter.

42. Mr. DUVAL (Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, as indicated in paragraph 6 of document A/C.5/47/54, there had been an underexpenditure of the grant appropriated in 1991 by the General Assembly; accordingly, the Secretary-General proposed to use the balance of the grant approved for 1992 for the same purpose, namely, the financing of administrative costs.

43. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to take the action he had outlined (see para. 40).

44. It was so decided.

45. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom), explaining his delegation's position on the decision just adopted, re-emphasized, for the record, the views which he had just expressed.

AGENDA ITEM 124: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued) (A/47/484, A/47/655 and Corr.1 and A/47/757)

46. Mr. NIELSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, expressed firm support for United Nations peace-keeping activities, to which the Nordic countries were committed both politically and in terms of providing resources, having taken part in almost all peace-keeping operations and provided almost 10 per cent of the total United Nations peace-keeping force. The expanding role of the Organization in peace-keeping meant that such operations would account for almost $3 billion in 1992, which was close to three times the size of the regular budget for that year, and further increases were likely in the future. There was thus an imperative need for the Organization to establish a sound financial basis for peace-keeping activity. He welcomed the fact that the pattern of payments to peace-keeping operations had improved during 1992, but noted that outstanding assessed contributions were even higher than in previous years because of the increased level of peace-keeping budgets. That situation not only undermined the Organization's ability to carry out peace-keeping activities but also placed an additional and unfair burden on troop-contributing countries, to which the United Nations owed some $550 million. Almost half of that amount was owed to the Nordic countries.

47. The financing of peace-keeping activities must be based on the principle of collective responsibility in accordance with Article 17 of the Charter. It was thus an anomaly that UNFICYP was financed on the basis of voluntary contributions. Equally, the financing of some components of UNPROFOR constituted another exception to the rule of collective responsibility and must not create a precedent.

48. The Nordic countries fully supported the idea of a Peace-keeping Reserve Fund to facilitate the financing of the initial stage of peace-keeping operations and to cover unforeseen expenditures, and trusted that the necessary action to establish it would be taken at the current session. In addition, the idea of a Peace Endowment Fund was innovative and interesting, as was the proposal that the General Assembly should appropriate one third of the estimated cost of each new operation as soon as the Security Council decided to mount it; both suggestions merited further consideration. The Nordic countries did not support the proposal that the Secretary-General should be allowed to place contracts without competitive bidding, since such an approach did not conform to the principles of accountability and cost-effectiveness.

49. Regarding the special scale of assessments for peace-keeping operations, the Nordic countries supported the view that only the least developed countries should be placed in group (d). Since special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rested with the permanent members of the Security Council, it was a matter of principle that the Member States in group (a) should contribute relatively more. While some anomalies might exist in the assignment of countries to groups (b) and (c), it would not

(Mr. Nielsen, Denmark)

be appropriate to make per capita national income the sole criterion in establishing those groups. In that connection he commended Spain, which, on its own initiative, had moved from group (c) to group (b).

50. Ms. Rotheiser (Austria), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

51. Mr. HEGBE (Togo) welcomed the increasing involvement of the Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security, through both negotiation and the deployment of United Nations forces. With regard to the latter, it was clear that the United Nations could not respond to the demands on its resources without the support of all Member States. Even more financial resources would be needed to implement the proposals for peace-keeping made by the Secretary-General, which his delegation supported. While he endorsed the principle of collective responsibility in financing peace-keeping operations, account must be taken of capacity to pay and of level of development. A scale based on such an approach would provide substantial and predictable resources. His delegation supported the recommendation for training in peace-keeping activities, and welcomed the establishment of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations as part of a more rational structure.

52. Mr. NEJEDLÝ (Czechoslovakia) said that Czechoslovakia should be transferred from group (b) to group (c), but respected the view that a decision thereon should be taken only after the two successor States to the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic had been admitted to the Organization in January 1993.

53. His delegation welcomed the consideration in the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/484) of the issue of anomalies. No one refuted that per capita national income should be the basic criterion in determining assessments for peace-keeping operations, a fact that must be reflected in the Committee's resolutions. A solution to the problem of financing of peace-keeping operations must be found on an urgent basis.

54. Mr. RANDRIAMALALA (Madagascar) said that the apportionment of the costs of peace-keeping operations had always been a delicate matter, involving the use of special arrangements. The Committee now had three choices. Firstly, it could support the scale proposed in annex II to document A/47/484; while the methodology was somewhat simplistic, it was clear. Secondly, the Committee could overhaul the current system of apportionment, and formulate new criteria for the establishment of the groups. That would be a difficult undertaking. Should the Committee proceed in that manner, the current members of group (a) should maintain their special status in terms of apportionment of expenses. Thirdly, as a middle course, the current groups could be maintained, but with appropriate reclassifications so as to remove anomalies. Of the three options, the middle course accorded best with the views of the General Assembly at the forty-sixth session. In any event, it was important to take a decision at the current session in order to classify the new Member

(Mr. Randriamalala, Madagascar)

States and to reclassify States experiencing economic difficulties, particularly the least developed countries.

55. Mr. HENG Choon Boon (Singapore) said that peace-keeping operations must be funded on a just basis. In that connection, his delegation would have reservations regarding any system that used per capita national income as the sole criterion.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
43rd meeting
held on
Sunday, 13 December 1992
at 12 noon
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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Status of technological innovations in the United Nations

Progress report on the optical disk project

Integrated management information system project

Honoraria payable to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations

* Items considered together.

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92-58233 6537S (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/47/SR.43
18 December 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 12.50 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 108: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY COORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (continued) (A/47/443, A/47/593 and Corr.1 and A/47/746)

AGENDA ITEM 109: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT (continued) (A/46/34 and A/46/219; A/47/16 (Part I), A/47/34, A/47/119, A/47/276, A/47/373 and A/47/755)

1. Mrs. DAES (Joint Inspection Unit) said that the Joint Inspection Unit would analyse the Committee's recommendations on how to improve its work, including recommendations relating to the subjects on which the Unit should report. In practice the Unit based its programme of work on matters of concern to delegations and specialized agencies, in addition to its reports prepared on the initiative of its Inspectors.

2. The General Assembly, in its decision 46/446, had requested the Advisory Committee to examine the functioning of the Joint Inspection Unit, and a joint JIU/ACABQ meeting had been held in June 1992. It was regrettable that little reference had been made, in the report of the Advisory Committee (A/47/755), to the results of that meeting. For its part, the Unit had welcomed the meeting as a means of improving its relations with the Advisory Committee. She regretted the delay in issuing the Advisory Committee's report on JIU, which had not left adequate time for consideration. With regard to the content of the Advisory Committee's report, the Fifth Committee would appreciate the fact that the bodies inspected by JIU were not an unbiased source of information regarding its activities, since the more efficiently the Unit worked, the more unpopular it was. Concerning the recommendation for reports that were more action-oriented, the Unit was already moving in that direction, as evidenced by its report on peace-keeping operations.

3. The Advisory Committee had failed to endorse the recommendations in the Unit's 1991 report (A/46/34) that its staffing and resources should be increased. Yet the lack of adequate resources was a problem for the Unit in terms of increasing its productivity. In that connection the General Assembly, in its resolution 45/237, had requested the Secretary-General to review the research and analytical capacity of the Unit in order to enhance its performance.

4. The Advisory Committee's recommendations were far-reaching, and in some cases coincided with the Unit's own assessment, in particular regarding the preparation of the programme of work of the Unit and the format and content of its reports.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Status of technological innovations in the United Nations (A/47/7/Add.8; A/C.5/47/18)

Progress report on the optical disk project (A/47/7/Add.8; A/C.5/47/18/Add.1)

Integrated management information system project (A/47/7/Add.8; A/C.5/47/27)

5. Mr. BOIN (France) said that the optical disk project was the poor relation in the technological innovations programme, and that the picture presented by the Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/47/18/Add.1) was somewhat pessimistic. While there had been some increases in management costs, they had been offset by maintenance costs lower than the original estimates, while the cost of the project as a whole was some $300,000 less than the original estimate approved at the forty-sixth session.

6. His delegation regretted the delays in linking missions to the optical disk system, as well as the meagre description in the report of the Secretary-General of the advantages offered by the system. In fact using optical disks would lead to an immense reduction in the storage capacity required for documents, which, in the case of Geneva alone, would mean a reduction of shelf space from some 42 kilometres to less than 1 kilometre.

7. In contrast, the fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the integrated management information system (IMIS) (A/C.5/47/27) contained a long list of benefits. While not denying the validity of those benefits, there was, to say the least, a lack of balance between the reports on the optical disk and IMIS projects. In addition, his delegation noted with regret the scant attention paid to training staff in the new technologies; they could hardly be expected to succeed without a serious training component. Indeed, the amount allocated for training in 1993 was less than for 1992.

8. With regard to the allocation of IMIS expenditures, the percentages referred to by the Advisory Committee (A/47/7/Add.8, para. 23) had been determined before the expansion of peace-keeping activities, so that in effect there was a disproportionate charge to the regular budget. The matter should be addressed at the resumed session of the Committee early in 1993, and a higher percentage charged to peace-keeping operations. That would release resources in the regular budget which could then be used to expedite the optical disk project, particularly the linking of missions to the system, and the training of staff in the use of the new technologies.

9. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) regretted the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the report on the status of technological innovations should no longer be issued, since it provided a useful overview. With regard to the optical disk project, he asked whether the contract had been open to competitive bidding. With respect to IMIS, he asked how many posts would be eliminated as a result of the introduction of the new technology, which should lead to substantial savings. It might, for example, no longer be necessary to have a Deputy Controller.

10. Mr. DUVAL (Officer-in-charge, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, in response to questions about the optical disk project, any appropriations could be applied to the upgrading of hardware. The delay in linking missions at Geneva to the system was due to a problem with the Swiss telecommunications system. In New York, the connection of missions was anticipated for early 1993. In reply to the representative of France, he remarked that the optical disk system would have major advantages, but so far it was difficult to calculate the savings. More specific data would be available when phase III was implemented in 1994-1995. Training for the optical disk project and the integrated management information system (IMIS) would receive high priority in the 1994-1995 budget, and if the appropriations were not sufficient, he would ask ACABQ for an adjustment.

11. He informed the United States representative that no specific reference had been made to staff reductions resulting from IMIS. It was difficult so far to quantify savings on staff costs but they were anticipated and would be reported as soon as possible.

12. Mr. PATTERSON, (Chief Editor, Office of Conference Services) said that, in respect of contracts for the optical disk project, standard international competitive bidding procedures had been followed. In November 1990, a request for proposals had been sent to 16 firms which met the technical requirements. Replies had been received from three, then reviewed by an international departmental committee. The contract had been awarded to the firm making the lowest bid and meeting the technical requirements.

13. Mr. BOIN (France) inquired whether the cost-sharing formula for IMIS was feasible from the budgetary standpoint, and whether the revised distribution of expenditure by budget categories would be available for examination at the resumed session in February.

14. Mr. DUVAL (Officer-in-charge, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the distribution of expenditure by budgetary category was under study. Before submitting that information to ACABQ, the amount of change over the previous year had been studied. The provisional conclusion was that the share to be provided from peace-keeping had tripled, which had been compensated by a significant decline in extrabudgetary financing. The share from the regular budget had remained virtually unchanged. A detailed report would be submitted to ACABQ, and the new information should be available before the resumed session.

15. Ms. SJOLANDER (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that they were satisfied with the progress achieved in the report of the Secretary-General on the integrated management information system project (IMIS) (A/C.5/47/27). They were encouraged to learn that the project was on the right track and would meet its high expectations. It would replace the many individual systems developed over the years. Other organizations within the United Nations system had expressed interest in IMIS, which could lead to common standards of accounting. The benefits would depend, however, on

(Ms. Sjolander, Sweden)

installation, management and technical support. The Nordic countries agreed with ACABQ on the importance of training and the transfer of knowledge. The allocation of adequate resources for training was a good investment, and it was encouraging that it would be given high priority.

16. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the status of technological innovations in the United Nations and the progress report on the optical disk project.

17. It was so decided.

18. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the integrated management information system project (IMIS) and should endorse the recommendations of ACABQ thereon.

19. It was so decided.

Honoraria payable to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations (A/C.5/47/45)

20. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said, with regard to the payment of honoraria payable to members of United Nations organs, that over the years his delegation had opposed such payments in principle as unjustified. It could not accept that such payments should be adjusted for inflation, since the per diem granted to members was frequently adjusted. Further, his delegation saw no linkage between the workload of a member of an organization and honoraria. While many treaties establishing those organizations provided for payment of honoraria to members, they did not set any rate. Therefore, he proposed that the Committee should reduce such payments to the symbolic amount of one dollar per year in order to ensure that treaty requirements were met without undue expenditure.

21. Another issue in the report concerned the payment of spousal benefits to members of ACABQ. In recent years, members had endured lengthy separations from their families, and that serious issue must be given consideration. However, his delegation had some questions regarding paragraph 55 of the Secretary-General's report. In paragraph 13 of its report (A/47/7/Add.10), ACABQ had refrained from comment, since the matter involved the Advisory Committee itself. His delegation believed that to be the proper course of action, and hoped that, in future, all matters regarding the financing of the Advisory Committee would be dealt with directly in the Fifth Committee. Given the interest of delegations in that question, it should be addressed in informal consultations.

22. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman, Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Secretary-General had discussed the payment of honoraria for members of six committees/organs in his report (A/C.5/47/45). Travel and subsistence allowances were also paid to members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and upon its entry into force, they would be paid to members of the Committee established by the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The Advisory Committee had noted that there were no consistent criteria for the payment of honoraria, and that the Secretary-General's report was not comprehensive to the extent of including whether other bodies in the United Nations system warranted such payments. However, the Secretary-General had not been involved in the development of the decisions or the rationale for payments. The General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to keep those levels under review. He had recommended a 25 per cent increase in honoraria, since they had remained unchanged since 1981, and ACABQ agreed with that recommendation.

23. Turning to paragraphs 54, 55 and 57 of the Secretary-General's report, he said that there were examples of payment of travel for family members of persons other than Secretariat staff working for United Nations organs, therefore, the proposal did not break new ground. The amount of money involved was small and it was unlikely that additional appropriations would be required. The interest of members of delegations in that question was not related to the amount but to the question of principle and the fear of establishing a precedent that might widen the application of such payments.

24. The problem of the conditions under which some members of ACABQ were forced to work must be addressed sympathetically. Currently, ACABQ required its members to be away from their families for over eight months per year, and during 1993 that period of time could be even longer. The members would appreciate a speedy solution to an increasingly unbearable sacrifice. Comments had been made that any member of ACABQ who could not attend meetings should resign and allow another to take the position and that appointees should be made aware of what to expect. That was not the best solution, nor was it fair, however. No one could have anticipated that ACABQ would be meeting for over eight months per year. It had also been said that all members should be based in New York, but it was not proper for members to serve on their mission staffs in addition. Over the years, it had been found that a mix of New York-based and overseas members was best for providing a balance. Therefore, he respectfully requested the Fifth Committee to consider a small human rights measure to ensure that such a balance could be maintained.

25. Mr. BOIN (France) said that, while he was not unsympathetic to the situation of ACABQ members, he would like to know the daily and monthly per diem rate granted to the members and whether it declined over the course of their stay in New York. The financial situation of the members coming from their capitals did not appear to be critical, and he objected to the linkage of their situation with the many serious human rights situations with which the United Nations was currently dealing.

26. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) shared the opinions and concerns expressed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. On a related matter, he noted that the Chairman had been asked to coordinate the informal consultations on travel expenses for members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) from developing countries. Even if a decision could not be reached on the comprehensive study of the question of honoraria, a decision should be taken as soon as possible to allow reimbursement of travel expenses, on an exceptional basis, for UNCITRAL members from the developing countries.

27. Mr. FONTAINE (Cuba) pointed out that the decisions concerning the honoraria payable to members of subsidiary organs were not taken by the Secretary-General, who was only communicating the decisions of the bodies concerned. Careful consideration should be given to that arrangement and the procedures followed, and the question could be discussed in exceptionally informal consultations.

28. With regard to the Advisory Committee, he fully endorsed the remarks made by the Chairman of ACABQ and agreed that the matter should be discussed further in informal consultations. In addition, the requests for information made by a number of delegations should also be dealt with during those consultations.

29. Mr. BOIN (France), speaking on a point of order, said that the Committee was faced with an ethical problem, since it could not at the same time be both the judge and the judged, and the Advisory Committee had been right to refrain from commenting. As the Committee was not in a position to consider the matter objectively, it should defer all discussion on it for the time being.

30. Mr. CHUINKAM (Cameroon) welcomed the remarks of the representative of Morocco, but pointed out that two other related matters needed to be taken into consideration during the informal consultations concerned, namely confidence-building in Central Africa and the denuclearization of Africa.

31. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) agreed that, in view of its sensitivity, the matter should be referred to informal consultations. The decision of the Advisory Committee not to comment on the provisions in paragraph 55 of the report (A/C.5/47/45) represented a step in the right direction, in that it would avoid any appearance of impropriety. The principle that individuals who could benefit from a decision should not participate in such a decision was extremely important. She hoped that it would set a precedent for dealing with other matters which came before the Advisory Committee in future, such as compensation for the Chairman and other members. However, she wondered how that concern could be reconciled with the remarks made by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee.

32. Her delegation did not believe that, in such cases, the Secretary-General's recommendations should be simply accepted without question, but rather that procedures should be established allowing for dialogue and debate, so as to ensure that adequate controls were exercised and decisions implemented responsibly. The Fifth Committee could play an increased role in that regard.

33. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) pointed out that the proposals under consideration were those of the Secretary-General put forward in a report of the Secretary-General. They had been submitted because the Secretary-General believed that everything possible should be done to facilitate the work of a committee which was of crucial importance to the functioning of the Organization. He further pointed out that no link had been made between the defrayment of costs for spouses and the level of the emoluments or per diem allowances received by members of the Advisory Committee. Such per diem allowances were not exceptional and were comparable to those paid to various other bodies.

34. Mr. BOIN (France) wondered whether the Acting Controller could give the figure in dollars for the monthly per diem allowance paid to members of the Advisory Committee. He also wondered whether the same amount was paid each month for eight months or whether the payments were degressive in nature. The information should be made public and not merely provided in informal consultations as suggested by the representative of Cuba.

35. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) asked whether there was any difference in the position of expert members of the Advisory Committee and that of individuals appointed to other expert bodies in the system.

36. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that, in his understanding, the honoraria provided to the various treaty bodies, such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, were paid on an exceptional basis and were not intended to set a precedent. Unfortunately, the exception seemed to have become the rule. He wanted to know whether any other bodies referred to in the report of the Secretary-General were receiving honoraria on an exceptional basis. In addition, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had referred to a review of the modalities for financing the costs of treaty bodies chargeable to the regular budget. The Advisory Committee had not yet submitted any report on that matter to the General Assembly and he wondered what progress had been made. He agreed that the question as a whole should be referred to informal consultations for further consideration.

37. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, since it was clearly not possible to take a decision at the present juncture, the matter should be referred to informal consultations for further discussion.

38. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
44th meeting
held on
Monday, 14 December 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZAHID (Morocco)
(Vice-Chairman)

later: Mr. DINU (Romania)
(Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)*

Proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 1994-1995

Prototype of a new budget format

Procedures and norms for the creation, suppression, reclassification, conversion and redeployment of posts

Extrabudgetary resources of the United Nations

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.18 concerning agenda item 61 (1)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.2 concerning agenda item 62 (b)

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* Items considered together.

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/47/SR.44
21 December 1992

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CONTENTS (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.14, as orally revised, concerning agenda item 59

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.20/Rev.1 concerning agenda item 97

AGENDA ITEM 111: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

In the absence of Mr. Dinu (Romania), Mr. Zahid (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 103: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 1994-1995 (A/47/7/Add.9, A/47/16 (Part II) and A/47/358)

Prototype of a new budget format (A/47/7/Add.9 and A/47/16 (Part II); A/C.5/47/3)

Procedures and norms for the creation, suppression, reclassification, conversion and redeployment of posts (A/47/7/Add.9 and A/47/16 (Part II); and A/C.5/47/4)

Extrabudgetary resources of the United Nations (A/45/797; A/46/545; A/47/7/Add.9; A/C.5/46/56)

1. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States said that budgetary reform depended on participation by Member States throughout the budget-preparation process as a way of promoting consensus on the overall level of expenses and ensuring predictability of Members' contributions. Priority-setting was an important stage in that process; the European Community and its member States endorsed the proposals regarding priorities put forward by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 10 to 12 of his report on the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 1994-1995 (A/47/358). The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) had recommended further consideration of those proposals in the light of the areas identified in paragraph 12 of resolution 45/253 as priorities under the medium-term plan. However, since the Secretary-General's outline related only to the regular budget, it was logical to review priority claims on regular budget resources at the current stage. The purposes and principles of the Charter should be seen as a coherent whole, and indeed the Secretary-General's proposals reflected his appreciation that the various interrelated United Nations objectives involved must all be given due weight. His latest report on restructuring (A/47/753) had, on the other hand, rightly brought out the growing emphasis on the promotion of human rights as one of the primary objectives and an important component of sustainable development. The United Nations was unique among multilateral organizations in having the capacity to achieve the aims of the relevant major programme, provided that appropriate resources were made available under the regular budget as well.

(Mr. Stitt, United Kingdom)

2. The Secretary-General had proposed a preliminary estimate of $2,410 million at initial 1992-1993 rates for the biennium 1994-1995, while the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), using a somewhat different basis for the calculation, had recommended a slightly lower figure without indicating a growth rate in percentage terms. In any case, both the initial appropriation for 1992-1993 and the anticipated revised estimates included elements - unforeseen and extraordinary expenditure and the contingency fund - which the outline excluded. The European Community and its member States supported the CPC request for clarification of the method of calculating real growth and for an ACABQ study. In terms of simplicity and transparency, the new methodology was a clear improvement, but in terms of comparability, further refinement was needed. As in the past, the outline would correspond to only one component, albeit the largest, of the overall level of resources to be approved in the next year for the following biennium. A number of factors could change the growth rate calculated by the Secretary-General, as indicated in the CPC report (A/47/16 (Part II), para. 220) and, since the revised estimates for the biennium 1992-1993 were now to constitute the base, there could be no certainty of the exact level of growth until the end of the current session. The Advisory Committee had consequently continued the practice of updating both the forecast level of the revised estimates and the outline itself.

3. The European Community and its member States had always believed that the level of resources proposed by the Secretary-General should be all-inclusive. If, however, the Secretariat was unable or unwilling to produce a comprehensive estimate by mid-August in off-budget years as agreed, a preliminary figure might just as well be communicated to CPC in time for its regular session, instead of having CPC meet in resumed session to consider the relevant document. In any event, the Community and its member States questioned the justification for increasing the outline by exactly the same amount as the revised estimates, because most additional resource requirements arising in 1993 as a result of action by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session were specific to 1993 and would not recur in the following biennium. The Community and its member States noted that additional staff requirements for the biennium 1994-1995 would be met through redeployment in the context of the preparation of the proposed programme budget, a process that should take account of programme priorities.

4. Since the outline procedure was still being developed, the Community and its member States were prepared to accept the figure for a stable overall level of resources recommended by the Advisory Committee, provided that others too could do so. That figure would need to be respected, however, once it had been adopted as the basis for the preparation of the programme budget. The Community and its member States would agree to proceed as recommended on the understanding that the methodology would be further reviewed, also in respect of the treatment of unforeseen and extraordinary expenditure, and that the budget proposals themselves would be subject to careful scrutiny, particularly with regard to capital expenditure and vacancy rates. Any proposal for an overall increase in real terms would need to be convincingly justified.

(Mr. Stitt, United Kingdom)

5. On the difficult question of recosting, the previous outline had proved to contain a significant error, on which further explanation by the Secretariat or the Advisory Committee would have been welcome. Currently, only the outline costed at initial 1992-1993 rates could be regarded as authoritative.

6. Given the size of the contingency fund, the European Community and its member States agreed that there was no need to change the existing level of 0.75 per cent of the programme budget. Moreover, it was their position that, once established for a particular biennium, the size of the fund must not be subject to modification, for that would defeat the fund's purpose and would mean, in effect, a return to the old controversial and damaging practice of adding new appropriations without limit to an already approved budget. Any derogation from the new procedures would be contrary to the reform process and would call into question the continued relevance of resolution 41/213.

7. Ms. SJÖLANDER (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, referred to the prototype of a new budget format submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/3) and welcomed the efforts made thus far to achieve simplicity and transparency. Under the new format, the first part of the budget would provide a comprehensive description of its main features and of the implementation of priorities, and would presumably be drafted in effect as a separate document. In the second part of the new budget, care must be taken to establish the needs of programme managers on the one hand and Member States on the other, since overly detailed information might be seen as an invitation to micromanagement by governments. The changes in the budget format were timely in terms of the restructuring of the Secretariat, and the Nordic delegations expected all changes to be duly reflected in the budget for the 1994-1995 biennium.

8. The ad hoc technical seminar held in April 1992 to review the question of the methodology used for the preparation of the programme budget, in which the Nordic countries had participated, had proved useful and, as CPC had recommended, it should be followed by a thorough review of the medium-term plan, which might require even more far-reaching changes.

9. The ideal budget document of the not-too-distant future should include broad references to the current medium-term plan and indicate how a particular budget fitted in with that plan. That would require monitoring and evaluation as a basis for continuous modifications in the budget process.

10. The Nordic countries also welcomed greater transparency on extrabudgetary resources in the new budget format. They had long been proponents of presenting voluntary resources alongside the regular budget resources so that Member States could have a comprehensive view of all resources available for United Nations activities.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.18 concerning agenda item 61 (l) (A/47/7/Add.11; A/C.5/47/50)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.2 concerning agenda item 62 (b) (A/47/7/Add.11; A/C.5/47/64)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.14, as orally revised, concerning agenda item 59 (A/47/7/Add.11; A/C.5/47/65)

11. The CHAIRMAN reported that it had been agreed in informal consultations he had conducted on the programme budget implications of draft resolutions A/C.1/47/L.18, L.2 and L.14 as orally revised that all recommendations in the Secretary-General's respective statements of programme budget implications could be adopted, on the understanding that the exception to the rules on reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses for government representatives related to the 1993 programme budget only and, pending the conclusion of the general review of that issue, would not constitute a precedent.

12. He suggested that, on that understanding, and on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/47/50) and the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.18, an additional appropriation estimated at $79,500 would be required under section 37 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, subject to the guidelines for the use and operation of the contingency fund adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 42/211.

13. It was so decided.

14. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the understanding referred to earlier, and on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/47/64) and the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.2, an additional appropriation estimated at $203,200 would be required under section 37 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, subject to the guidelines for the use and operation of the contingency fund adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 42/211.

15. It was so decided.

16. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the understanding referred to earlier, and on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/47/65) and the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.14 as orally revised, an additional appropriation estimated at $72,300 would be required under section 37 of the programme

(The Chairman)

budget for the biennium 1992-1993, subject to the guidelines for the use and operation of the contingency fund adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 42/211. The modifications in the approved programme of work outlined in paragraph 6 of document A/C.5/47/65, would also be required.

17. It was so decided.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.20/Rev.1 concerning agenda item 97 (A/47/7/Add.12; A/C.5/47/55)

18. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/47/55) and the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.20/Rev.1, the Secretary-General would establish an observer mission to be known as the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Referendum in Eritrea (UNOVER) under the terms of reference outlined by the Secretary-General in paragraph 4 of document A/C.5/47/55. The Assembly would authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not exceeding $2 million pending receipt of voluntary contributions for that operation. The related commitment would be treated as an advance from the Working Capital Fund, in accordance with financial regulation 6.4, and any supplementary appropriations required would be dealt with in the context of the second performance report.

19. It was so decided.

20. Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium) said that the observer mission in question should if possible be funded from the regular budget.

21. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada), said that the proper procedure for dealing on an ad hoc basis with such a request for an observer mission would have been that proposed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 21 of his statement of programme budget implications.

22. Mr. KELLY (Ireland) said that he concurred with Belgium and Canada.

23. Mr. Dinu (Romania) took the Chair.

24. The CHAIRMAN said that the members of the Committee would proceed to hold informal consultations on agenda item 111.

The meeting was suspended at 11.25 a.m. and resumed at 12.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 111: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/47/11)

25. Mr. SUZIEDĖLIS (Lithuania) proposed that, since no agreement had been reached during the informal consultations just held on a proposal submitted at the previous meeting, by the representative of Estonia on behalf of his own and other delegations, the Committee should defer consideration of the item.

26. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.